

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This amendment is in response to an Office Action dated May 27, 2004. The Examiner is thanked for his thorough examination of the subject application.

In the Office Action, claims 2-7 and 11-15 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected claim, but after careful analysis, these claims were considered by the Examiner to contain patentable subject matter. Applicant has placed dependent claims 2, 3 and 11 into independent form, each including the limitations of its base claims (claim 1 or claim 10). Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection and allow pending claims 2-7 and 11-15.

In addition to the above-noted objection, claims 8 & 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 and claims 1, 10 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection, but in order to facilitate prosecution of the subject application, claims 1 and 8-10 have been cancelled without prejudice. With respect to claim 16, however, Applicant has added the limitations set forth in objected claim 2 in order to place claim 16 in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the § 102(e) rejected directed toward claim 16 and allow claim 16 as now amended.

In light of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowance at the Examiner's earliest opportunity.

Conclusion

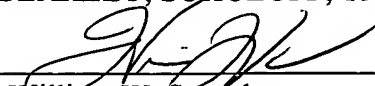
Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 09/14/2004

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